(b) whether any assessment has been made with regard to the decline in agricultural research, both in quantitative and qualitative terms; and

(c) steps being taken to reverse this trend?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Periodic assessment is made for both Institutes as well as All India Coordinated Research Projects by eminent Scientists through quin-quennial review teams (QRT), Work shops, Mid-term Review etc.

(c) Based on the recommendation of (b) above corrective measures are taken by the Council.

Declining trend of capital formation in Agriculture

4403. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment on the likely adverse effects of a dip in capital formation in agriculture over the last few years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps are proposed to reverse this declining trend of capital formation in agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) Gross capital formation in agriculture both at current as well as 1980-81 prices has increased after 1989-90.

(c) The strategy to increase capital formation in agriculture will include increasing the proportion of planned investment for development of infrastructure, more efficient use of resources to raise productivity and ensuring remunerative prices to farmers to induce them to go for higher investments in agriculture.

Purchase of edible oil by NDDB

4404. SHRI MENTAY PADMANABHAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision not to allow the National Dairy Development Board to purchase edible oils for the purpose of matket intervention;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) what are the other recommendations compiled by Government with regard to edible oil;

(d) whether market intervention in edible oils will be discontinued; and

(e) if so, the reasons for abandoning market intervention?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR): (a) and (b) The Empowered Committee on Oilseeds Policy (ECOP) has recommended modified terms and conditions for Market Intervention Operations (MIO) for FY 93-94 to limit the Government liability towards losses in MIO.

(c) and (d) ECOP directed DAC/TMO&P to obtain Government approval for the same alongwith the decisions for the future course of action for MIO from FY 94-95 onwards. A note for CCEA in this regard has been prepared and after incorporating the views of different Ministries will be placed before CCEA.

(e) In view of the above, the question does not arise.

Incidents of the landslides in the country

4405. SYED SIBTEY RAZI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether some incidents of landslide killing 100 persons and injuring several people in Darjeeling district of West Bengal have been reported on 88-93;

(b) if so, the details thereof with reasons for such landslide;

(c) whether incidents of landslide are becoming regular feature in hilly areas;

(d) if so, the details thereof State-wise during 1992 and 1993 upto July;

(e) whether Government propose to take some measures to check such incidents in future to avert human casualties and damage to properties; and

(f) if so, the details thereof and if not the resons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (f) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Reduction in excise duty on butter

4406. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI:
SHRI B. K. HARI PRASAD:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have reduced the excise duty on table butter;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the impact on retail price of the butter;

(d) whether the price of Amul butter is more than Vijaya and Aarey butter; and

(e) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) Butter has been fully exempted from payment of excise duty with effect from 25-7-1991 *vide* Government Notification No. 16/91-CE, dated 25th July, 1991.

(c) The sale price of butter depends on the cost of production which in turn is determined by a number of factors like purchase price or milk and cost of other input which vary from place to place.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The price of Amul butter is fixed in order to provide a remunerative price to the co-operative milk producers of Gujarat.

Foreign visits of Agricultural Minister

4407. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of foreign visits made by the Ministers of Agriculture during 1991-92 and 1992-93;

(b) the purpose of these visits; and

(c) the number of staff members who accompanied them during these visits and expenditure incurred thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Cultivation of seedless grapes

4408. SHRI BISHAMBHAR NATH PANDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that high yielding seedless grapes popular among grape-growers of Maharashtra is now grown in Tamil Nadu;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether Government have conducted the soil test to explore the other areas suitable for the cultivation of seedless grapes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI ARVIND NETAM): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Two varieties from Maharashtra namely Sonoka Tasa-Ganesh and Sharad seedless are performing well in Coimbatore conditions and likely to be expanded in other area of Tamil Nadu. Besides this Thompson seedless variety grown in Maharashtra and other parts of the country is also being grown in Tamil Nadu.

(c) No systematic soil testing have been undertaken to assess the areawise suitability for the grape cultivation in Tamil Nadu.

Production of Tobacco

4409. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: